CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

37

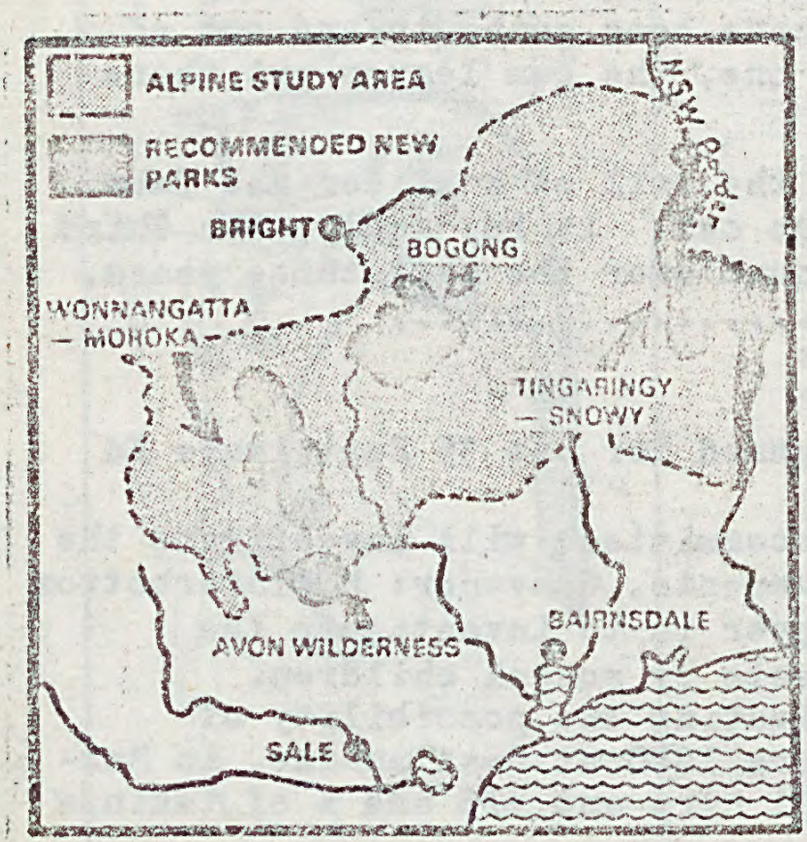
July 1979

President: Mrs R. Mills
Secretary: Mr G. Sitch
Treasurer: Mr L. Bransgrove
News-sheet: Mr E. Perkins.

Meetings are held on the second Friday of each month at the Castlemaine Education Centre, (SEC Building), Mostyn Street, Castlemaine, starting at 8.00 p.m. Visitors and prospective members are invited to attend the Club's sessions.

The alps

The final recommendations by the Land Conservation Council for the Alpine Study Area have now been released, and the report now goes to Parliament for consideration.



Major features of the report are shown on the map. A substantial portion has been left uncommitted.

The L.C.C. Study of the Alps began with a survey of the area, the results of which were published and made available to the public, who were then invited to make submissions. These were considered by the L.C.C. and provisional recommendations made. The public were again invited to comment, before the final recommendations were made.

The establishment of the Land Conservation Council was a major step in Conservation in Victoria; no longer was the question of conservation left to the whims of political expediency or subject to the pressure from lobbyists. I believe that any weakening of the role of the L.C.C. is not in the interests of conservation. We should support the implemenation of the L.C.C proposals, and oppose attacks on it whether they come from conservationist groups or commercial interests.

E.P.

SUGAR GLIDERS AT BARKERS CREEK by Wyn Palmer

Because of a lack of suitable sites, last year we decided to hang some hollow-log nesting boxes in the trees on our block. Before long a pair of white throated tree creepers took possession of one and raised a family.

This year we noticed a small face peering at us from a hole of a a second log, and some weeks later saw a sugar glider leave a third log and race up the tree to be lost amongst the foliage.

We decided to get a ladder and look in all the logs to see how many tenants we had! We were delighted to find in the fourth log, two half grown baby sugar gliders. The remaining logs each contained a cup shaped nest of green gum leaves, so it appeared the family was using all the logs except that chosen by the tree creepers. Since the babies have been fending for themselves, the tree creepers have been going in and out of several logs, removing, one by one, the gum leaves put there by the gliders.

More recently we found part of the tail of a glider and fear that one has fallen victim to an owl. It is, sadly, the third such bit of evidence we have found over the past three years.

.....

FROM THE COMMITTEE MEETING

Dargile Reserve Excursion Planned for Sat 15 Sept;leave Ed Centre at 10.00.

Burke and Wills Monument A subcommitteee will investigate the area to suggest possible improvements. Convenor: M Winterbottom

Tree Planting in Streets Mr Meyer is to investigate the possibility of planting in streets by school children.

Photoflora 1980 We are investigating the possibility of holding a screening of Photoflora 1980 at Castlemaine, in Mar-April. Major costs would be hall hire and $75 and % of takings

LEADBEATERS POSSUM. PAST BUSHFIRES THREATEN THE HABITAT OF A ONCE "RARE" POSSUM (Condensed from "Monash Review," June 1979)

(This article is of particular interest in view of Mrs Palmer's observations with Sugar Gliders. Could Leadbeaters Possum be helped by provision of large numbers of nesting boxes?)

A MONASH RESEARCHER believes that Leadbeater's possum, which was once so rare that it was presumed to be extinct for more than 50 years, faces a bleak future as an aftermath of the disastrous bushfires which swept Victoria in 1939.

The researcher, **Andrew Smith**, says scientific evidence suggests that there will be a severe reduction in the population size of the animal over the next 80 years. This situation has been brought about by a loss of habitat stemming directly from the fires, which destroyed vast tracts of mountain forests.

Smith says animals in the regrowth forests rely on dead mountain ash trees to provide nest hollows vital for their survival.

These large dead trees — commonly called 'stags' — which were killed by the fires, are rapidly falling over, and in 10 to 20 years there may be too few left in most areas of regrowth forests to support populations of hollow-dwelling possums and other animals.

(Illust from Env. action newsletter)

Says Smith: "The problem is that it takes about 120 years for the mountain ash — the tallest trees in Victorian forests — to develop suitable nest hollows.

"When the old stags are gone, there will be a period, probably lasting about 60 years, during which the 1939 re-growth forests will have few suitable nesting sites. Already there are many large tracts of regrowth forests that have few remaining stags.

"The animals are now relatively abundant, but the loss of their habitat means there will be a dramatic fall in their population."

Smith says Leadbeater's possum, which has the scientific name *Gymnobelideus leadbeateri*, was first described from two specimens caught in 1867. From then until 1909, only three more animals were found.

He says: "Despite extensive searches during the 1930s by zoologists, none was found, and the animal was presumed extinct — a view which firmed after the 1939 fires.

"But in 1961, it was re-discovered at Tommy's Bend, near Marysville, in the Central Highlands of Victoria. This rediscovery aroused considerable local and worldwide interest, and subsequent searches by amateur observers succeeded in locating the possum at about 50 individual locations."

"Leadbeater's possums are closely related to sugar gliders (see **Monash Review 4-78**) but because the sugar glider can glide, it is capable of colonising more open forests.

"Leadbeater's possum is limited in its range to more dense forests, where it can jump from tree to tree and branch to branch.

"The two species share similar niches in the ecosystem, and while their social organisation is different, they compete for the same food resources and for nest hollows.

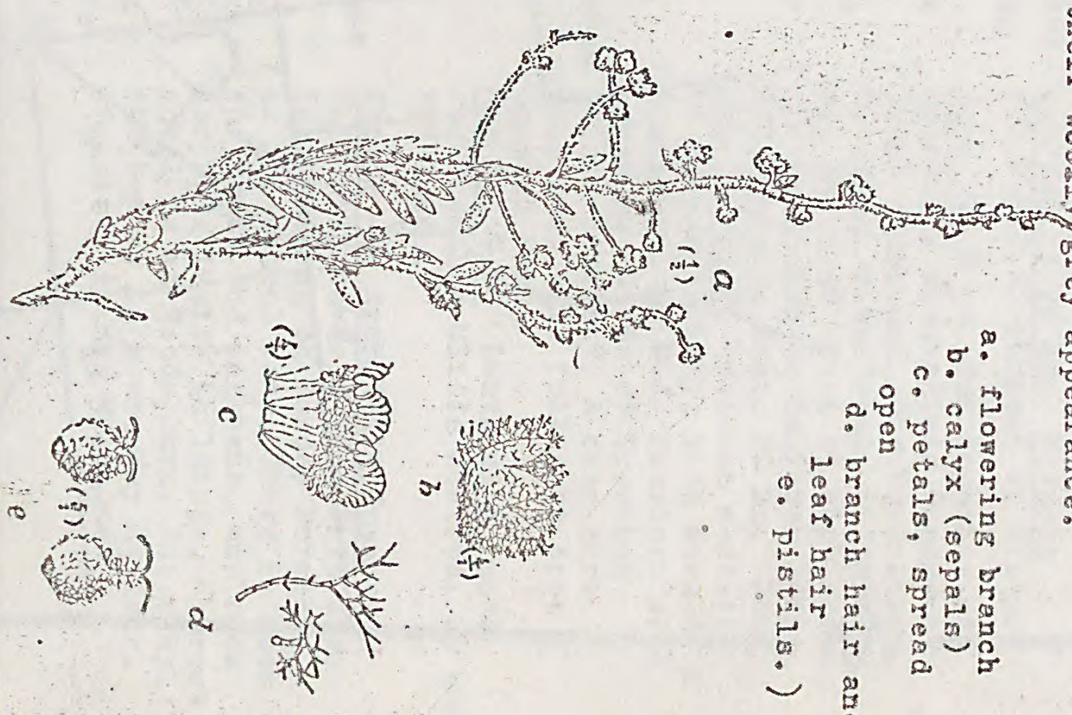
Says Smith: "It had been thought that the animals were clumped together in small colonies, but the survey revealed that they were widespread throughout the forest, with nest sites evenly spaced through the bush. It also appeared that each colony used up to three stags for nest sites.

MT. TARRENGOWER – COMMON PLANTS

(MANY SPECIES OBSERVED BY MR. BOB ALLEN, BENDIGO)

**Introduced species*

Acacia acinacea	Gold-dust wattle
Acacia armata	Hedge wattle
Acacia implexa	Lightwood
Acacia mearnsii	Black wattle
Acacia mucronata	Narrow-leaf wattle
Acacia pycnantha	Golden wattle
Acacia verniciflua	Varnish wattle
Acaena ovina	Sheep's burr
Actinobole uliginosum	Flannel cudweed
Agropyron scabrum	Common wheat-grass
Ajuga australis	Austral bugle
Amyena pendulum	Drooping mistletoe
**Anagallis arvensis*	Pimpernel
**Arctotheca calendula*	Cape weed
**Asparagus asparagoides*	Smilax asparagus
Asplenium flabellifolium	Necklace fern
**Briza maxima*	Large quaking-grass
**Bromus rubens*	Red brome
Bursaria spinosa	Sweet bursaria
**Carthamus lanatus*	Saffron thistle
Cassinia arcuata	Drooping cassinia (Chinese scrub)
Casuarina stricta	Drooping she-oak
**Centaurium pulchellum*	Centuary
Cheilanthes tenuifolia	Rock Fern
**Chrysanthemoides monilifera*	Boneseed
**Clematis microphylla*	Small-leaved clematis
Convolvulus erubescens	Pink bindweed
Correa glabra	Rock correa
Cymbonotus lawsonianus	Austral bear's-ear
Danthonia sp.	Wallaby grass
Daviesia ulicifolia	Gorse bitter-pea
Dianella revoluta	Black-anther flax-lily
Dichopogon strictus	Chocolate lily
Dodonaea angustissima	Slender hop-bush
Dodonaea cuneata	Wedge-leaf hop-bush
Drosera planchonii	Climbing sundew
Drosera whittakeri	Scented sundew
Eriostemon verrucosus	Fairy wax-flower
Eucalyptus blakelyi	Blakely's red gum
Eucalyptus goniocalyx	Long-leaf box
Eucalyptus leucoxylon	Yellow gum
Eucalyptus macrorhyncha	Red stringybark
Eucalyptus melliodora	Yellow box
Eucalyptus microcarpa	Grey box
Eucalyptus polyanthemos	Red box
Exocarpos cupressiformis	Cherry ballarat
Geranium solanderi	Austral crane's-bill
Glycine clandestina	Twining glycine
Haloragis elata	Raspwort
Haloragis tetragyna	Common raspwort
Hardenbergia violacea	Purple coral-pea
Helichrysum apiculatum	Common everlasting
Hibbertia stricta	Erect guinea-flower
Hypericum gramineum	Small St. John's wort
**Hypochoeris radicata*	Cat's ear
Indigofera australis	Australian indigo
**Inula graveolens*	Stinkwort
**Iris germanica*	German iris
Isotoma axillaris	Rock isotome
Kennedia prostrata	Running postman
Lepidosperma laterale	Variable sword-sedge
Lomandra longifolia	Spiny-headed mat-rush
Luzula campestris	Field woodrush
**Lycium ferocissimum*	African box-thorn
Lythrum hyssopifolia	Small loosestrife
**Marrubium vulgare*	Horehound
Melichrus urceolatus	Urn heath
Muellerina eucalyptoides	Creeping mistletoe
**Opuntia robusta*	Cumuesa
Oxalis corniculata	Yellow wood-sorrel
Pelargonium rodneyanum	Magenta stork's-bill
Pimelea humilis	Common rice-flower
Pimelea linifolia	Slender rice-flower
Plantago varia	Variable plantain
Pleurosorus rutifolius	Blanket fern
Poa sieberana	Tussock grass
**Polypogon monspeliensis*	Annual beard-grass
Pterostylis nana	Dwarf greenhood
Pterostylis revoluta	Autumn greenhood
Pultenaea largiflorens	Bush-pea
Ranunculus sp.	Buttercup
Rhagodia nutans	Nodding saltbush
**Rosa rubiginosa*	Sweet briar
**Rubus fruticosus, sp. agg.*	Blackberry
Schoenus apogon	Common bog-rush
**Senecio jacobaea*	Ragwort
Solanum laciniatum	Kangaroo apple
**Solanum nigrum*	Black nightshade.
Solenogyne bellioides	Solenogyne
**Sonchus asper*	Prickly sow thistle
Stackhousia monogyna	Creamy stackhousia
Stipa variabilis	Variable spear-grass
Tetratheca ciliata	Pink-bells
Themeda australis	Kangaroo grass
Thysanotus patersonii	Twining fringe-lily
**Tritolium arvense*	Hare's-foot clover
**Verbascum virgatum*	Twiggy mullein
Veronica plebeia	Trailing speedwell
Viola hederacea	Ivy-leaf violet
Vittadinia triloba	Common New Holland daisy
**Vulpia bromoides*	Squirrel-tail Fescue
Wahlenbergia stricta	*Tall Bluebell
Zieria aspalathoides	Whorled zieria



a. flowering branch
b. calyx (sepals)
c. petals, spread open
d. branch hair and leaf hair
e. pistils.)

From MT ALEXANDER MAIL Feb 14, 1884

Mr Doran of the Botanical Gardens has received some seeds named after him from Baron Mueller, the DICRASTALIS DORANI, discovered by Mr E. Giles, the explorer in Central Australia in the year 1874. The shrub is verbanaceous with a silvery leaf.

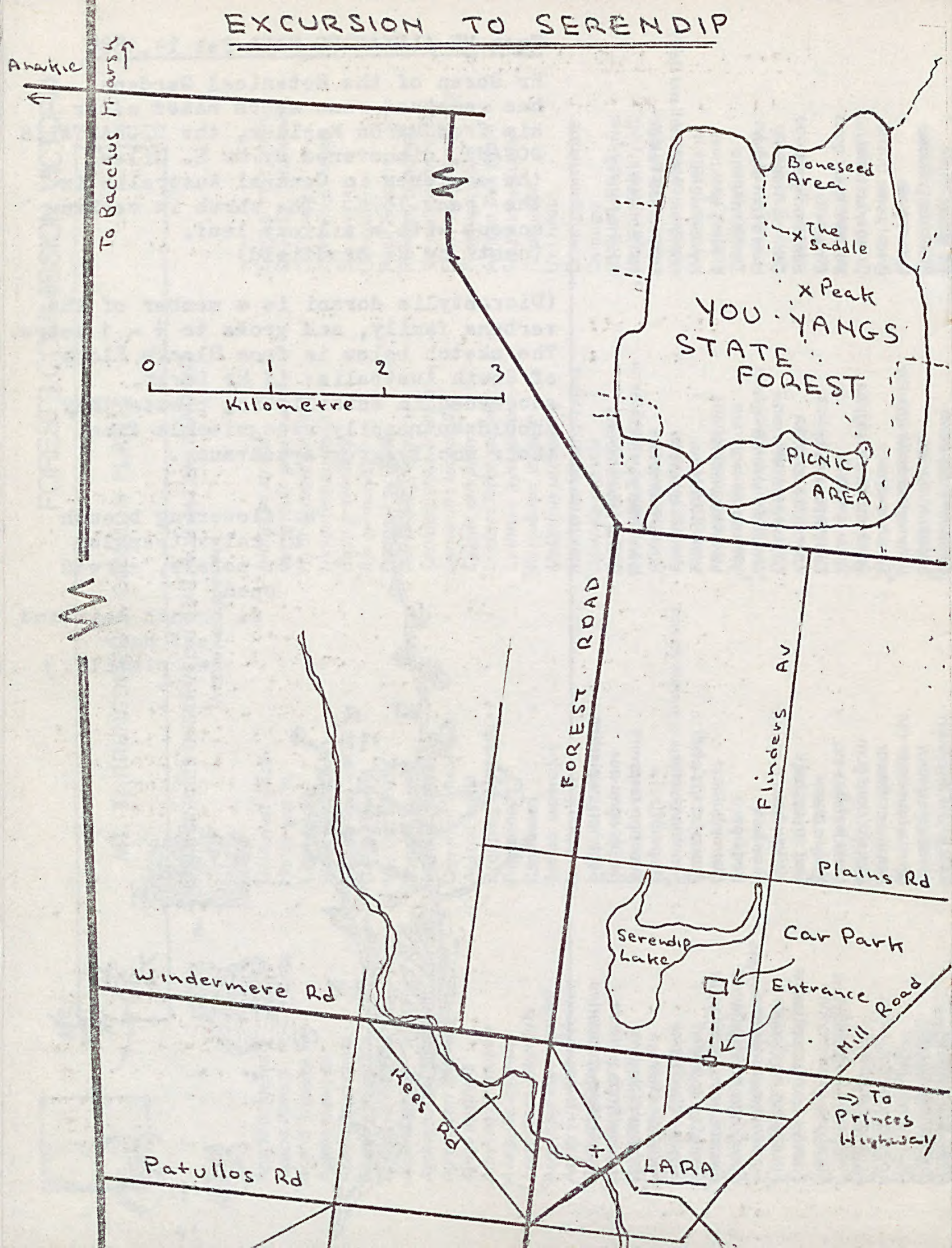
(cont. by R. Bradfield)

(Dicrastylis dorani is a member of the verbena family, and grows to ½ - 1 metre. The sketch below is from Black's Flora of South Australia; if Mr Doran succeeded in establishing plants they should be readily recognisable from their woolly grey appearance.

BHL

Blank Page Digitally Inserted

EXCURSION TO SERENDIP



CASTLEMAINE FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB PROGRAMME

MEETINGS (8 p.m., Ed Centre)

Friday July 13 Film Night
Solstice
Groote Island
Menura (NSW & Q wildlife)

Thursday July 26 Business meeting

Friday Aug 10 Switzerland

Speaker is Mr R. Furlong

Thurs Aug 23 Business meeting

Frid Sept 14 Paddys Ranges

Thurs Sept27 Business meeting

Frid Oct 12 October meeting

.....

MALDON WALK Because of the Wychitella campout, the annual walk for this year has been changed to Sat 13 October. Meet Ed Centre at 9.00 for transport to Maldon R.S. Return is via the railway line

SUPPER July- F. Meyer

SUBSCRIPTIONS Half-year rates now apply. These are

Family	$2.50
Single	$1.50
Junior	50

BUSINESS MEETINGS

The committe has decided that Club Business Meetings will be held on the fourth Thursday of each month, at 8.00 p.m. in the Ed,Centre. These meetings will be open to all Club members.

. . . .

The Committee has written to the Local Member and Minister supporting the L.C.C.

EXCURSIONS

Sat July 14 Tarrengower/Nuggetty
This is a joint excursion with the Maryborough FNC. Leave Education Centre at 1.30, meet MFNC at picnic area at the base of Mt Tarrengower at 1.45.

Sun Aug 12 Serendip
Leave Ed Centre at 10.00, for lunch at You Yangs picnic ground, followed by a tour of Fisheries & Wildlife Research Farm, Serendip, beginning at 1.30. (See map)

Sat/Sun 25/26 Aug Mildura
W.V.F.N.C.A. campout at Mildura.

Frid 24, 8 pm. Get together at Sunraysia Naturalists Research Trust clubrooms, Old Powerhouse Building, riverfront, Mildura.
Sat 25, 9.30 Meet at club rooms for excursion to Hollands Lake, NSW, Fareton East. 20 km. BBQ.
Sat 25, 6.30 Business meeting, St Margarets Hall; 11th Street & Deakin Av. Mr N.J. Favaloro will speak on "Birds of Trentham Cliffs Station". A camp fire sing song will follow at Apex Caravan Park.
Sun 25, 9.00 Leave club rooms for Trentham Cliffs Station, 29 km BBQ lunch.

Sept 21-24 Wychitella Campcut
This will be held from Frid evening, leaving on Monday Morning, at the school camp. There is room for tents and caravans, and room for beds inside buildings. Nearest motel is at Wedderburn. For many, the Monday is a showday holiday. Organiser is Mrs Mills.

OBSERVATIONS CORNER by G. Broadway

While wandering through the bush this month, keep a special lookout for the following:-

1. Earliest dates of flowering of
   Wattles: Early Black, others
   Eucalypts
   Orchids: Greenhoods, Mosquito, others.
   Early Nancy
   Purple Coral Pea.

2. Still in flower?
   Ironbarks
   Spreading Wattle
   Hakea
   Blue Bell

3. Birds.
   Any Chats, Swallows, Cuckoos, Brown Flycatcher
   Any birds nesting now? If so, do they have dome-shaped nests? Any reports on bird bathing behaviour this month? Which birds, and how long?

4. Any mistletoes which do not resemble their host plant? If so, which Mistletoe and which host?

5. Insects?
   Any larvae? e.g. Gum Saw Fly, Mottled Cup Moth, others?

6. Animals in ponds, puddles etc.

7. Frogs. Any eggs, tadpoles?

8. Look for coloured, flattish worms under logs or stones.

(for August meeting.)

Advert EMEU FOR SALE

A fine bird, stands between six and seven feet (about 2 m) in height, perfectly tame, and would be a great ornament in the grounds of a private gentleman's. Apply to James Hudson, storekeeper, Campbells Creek road, opposite Winters Flat

From Mt Alexander Herald, Dec 1859, Contr. by Ray Bradfield.

.....

Articles published do not necessarily reflect club opinion